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## ABSTRACT

This study describes a survey of public elementary schools in Wake County, North Carolina that examined what picture books that include mixed-race characters or mixed-race families are available and which are most commonly collected in public school media centers. Of the 79 elementary school media centers in the Wake County Public School System, 52 responded. A total of 34 titles that included a mixed-race character or a mixed-race family, where the family was not multiracial due to adoption, were identified. Nine titles proved to be highly collected, 11 were somewhat collected, and 14 titles were rarely collected. Half of the highly collected titles were award winners, whereas the mid and rarely collected category books have not won any awards. The parental racial combinations varied, but the prevalent pairing was African American/Caucasian. Titles appeared to be collected more because they were award-winning than because they represented a non-Caucasian population. The majority of elementary school media specialists had never been asked to find materials that included mixed-race characters or families. Overall, few of these books exist, and fewer still are collected in school media centers. Appendices include the school media collection survey instrument, survey data arranged by quantity owned, and an annotated list of racially mixed picture books. (Contains 29 references.) (Author/MES)

ED 476 154

DO YOU SEE YOUR FAMILY? :  
AN EXAMINATION OF RACIALLY MIXED CHARACTERS & FAMILIES  
IN CHILDREN'S PICTURE BOOKS AVAILABLE IN SCHOOL MEDIA CENTERS

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A Master's paper submitted to the faculty  
of the School of Information and Library Science  
of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill  
in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Science in  
Library Science.

Chapel Hill, North Carolina

November, 2002

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Approved by:

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Advisor

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Susan S. Lovett. Do You See Your Family? : An Examination of Racially Mixed Characters & Families in Children's Picture Books Available in School Media Centers. A Master's paper for the M.S. in L.S. degree. November, 2002. 37 pages. Advisor: Brian W. Sturm

This study describes a survey of public elementary schools in Wake County, North Carolina determining what picture books that include mixed-race characters or mixed-race families are available and which are most commonly collected in public school media centers.

Fifty-two of the seventy-nine elementary school media centers in the Wake County Public School System responded. Thirty-four titles that included a mixed-race character or a mixed-race family, where the family was not multiracial due to adoption, are identified. Nine titles prove to be highly collected, eleven titles are somewhat collected, and fourteen titles are rarely collected. Half of the highly collected titles are award winners, whereas the mid and rarely collected category books have not won any awards. The parental racial combinations vary, but the prevalent pairing is African American/Caucasian. Titles appear to be collected more because they are award-winning than because they represent a non-Caucasian population. The majority of elementary school media specialists have never been asked to find materials that include mixed-race characters or families. Overall, few of these books exist, and fewer still are collected in school media centers.

#### Headings:

- Racially mixed individuals – Children's Literature
- School libraries – North Carolina
- School library -- Collections
- Minorities in literature
- Picture books for children

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*"[America]...a nation in which racial and ethnic boundaries  
are becoming wonderfully blurry."*

~George F. Will  
Newsweek, March 25, 2002

## INTRODUCTION

The population statistics of mixed-race Americans have exploded in the last decade. The births to black-white interracial parents nearly tripled in the 1990s (Will), and in 1999 the Census Bureau estimated that there are over 1.3 million interracial marriages. Earlier reports projected that over 3 million children have racially mixed backgrounds, and that doesn't include the many transracial adoptions that have taken place since former President Clinton repealed the "same race" adoption rule (Kenney, 1). The 2000 U.S. Census expanded the former five major racial categories to 63 choices and counted 6.8 million Americans identifying themselves as multiracial (Blackman, 80). With more than one out of every 25 marriages being interracial (Kenney), the growing prominence of this population needs to be recognized.

In the last few years, role models for multiracial Americans have become more visible and open about their mixed heritages. Increasingly, widely accepted celebrities are sharing their multiracial backgrounds. Children look up to stars such as Alicia Keyes, Halle Berry, Dean Cain, WWF's "The Rock", Mariah Carey, Derek Jeter, and Lenny Kravitz. Moreover, what American has not read about Tiger Woods defining himself as "Cablinasian"? Just as children with disabilities or children from different ethnic groups need to see characters like themselves in picture books, racially mixed children need to see their own lives reflected in the literature they read. While racially

mixed kids are starting to see people like themselves on television, can they find characters like themselves in the books of their own school media centers?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

The necessity for culturally diverse, or non-Caucasian, American literature is widely recognized by teachers and librarians. Culturally diverse literature can strengthen ethnic pride and personal dignity for traditionally underrepresented minorities, while dispelling misunderstandings and breaking down previous prejudices among the majority culture. Rudine Sims Bishop states the essentiality of multicultural literature:

"If literature is a mirror that reflects human life, then all children who read or are read to need to see themselves reflected as part of humanity. If they are not, or if their reflections are distorted and ridiculous, there is the danger that they will absorb negative messages about themselves and people like them. Those who see only themselves or who are exposed to errors and misrepresentations are miseducated into a false sense of superiority, and the harm is doubly done" (quoted in Russell, 36).

Racially mixed children born in the 1990's are a bit more fortunate than their predecessors; they can actually read picture books about children like themselves, with mixed-race families that resemble the reader's home environment. Earlier generations weren't so privileged. The closest thing available to a biracial picture book in the late 1950's and 1960's was Garth Williams' *The Rabbits' Wedding*, published by Harper & Row in 1958. This simple story of two rabbits enjoying each other's company and getting married so they never have to be apart caused an uproar. Why? One bunny's fur is white, and the other's fur is black. One newspaper in Montgomery, Alabama attacked *The Rabbits' Wedding* as "integrationist propaganda, obviously aimed at children in the formative years of three to seven" (Long, 13). As Cynthia Leitich Smith

says, "...the implications of a black rabbit marrying a white rabbit sent fur flying" (Smith, 14). It wasn't until 1972 that a picture book including racially mixed human beings was even published!

With few books to review, it should come as no surprise that very little has been written about racially mixed characters and families, or the lack thereof, in children's picture books. Specifically, there are two main studies that have sought to identify children's books involving a racially mixed character or family: Margo Alexandre Long's 1984 study, and Mary Ann Capan & Cynthia Suarez's study in 1993. Capan & Suarez's study cites Long's article, as they attempted to extend the work Long had published nine years earlier.

Long's 1984 study asks, "What messages do these few books [that mention interracial families] convey to young readers?" (Long, 13). She identifies and describes the following four picture books: *The Rabbits' Wedding* by Garth Williams, *The Train* by Robert Welber, and *Black is Brown is Tan* and *All the Colors of the Race*, both by Arnold Adoff. Long finds *The Rabbits' Wedding* to be charming and that the "delightful illustrations, alone, give an important message that black and white (albeit rabbits) can play happily with one another" (Long 13). Her only criticism is the possible parallel between the black rabbit wanting to marry the white rabbit and the stereotype of African-American men preferring Caucasian women. In *The Train*, Long deems the illustrations an effective way to incorporate interracial families into children's literature, as they are the only indications of the African-American/Asian family. Adoff's two books both discuss a family's mixed racial background explicitly, and present the dual heritage as something to be celebrated. Long felt that, "All children would benefit from listening to and reading these celebrations of an interracial family" (Long 13). After describing eight chapter books that include, sometimes terribly so, racially mixed characters or families, Long concludes,

"Clearly, the interracial family is one subject that, with very few exceptions, has been largely ignored or mishandled in children's literature. The implications of that omission are serious. Monocultural children – and white children in particular – lack exposure to a valid interracial experience that will broaden their perspective on and understanding of our society. Interracial children, on the other hand, are denied the validation of their families and lifestyle that children's literature should provide" (Long, 15).

With not even a dozen books to represent them, interracial families weren't exaggerating twenty years ago when they described themselves as invisible to the publishing world (Shackford, 4). In 1993, Mary Ann Capan & Cynthia Suarez aimed to create a bibliography of young adult and children's racially mixed books that had been written since the time of Long's study. They assert,

"The cultural experiences of children who are the product of a biracial or biethnic marriage have generally been ignored in the school curriculum...For those students whose home culture matches the school's, the daily transition from home to school is smooth. The school's curriculum presents a cultural portrait with which the child easily identifies. The message that these children receive implies that their cultural heritage is valued and respected, naturally enhancing their self-image. But for those children whose home culture differs from that of the school, the daily transition may not be as easy because they may not see their culture represented in the curriculum. This omission tells them that their heritage is not valued and is not important...Providing children with literature that reflects multicultural experiences will help them to improve their self-esteem and validate their cultural heritage" (Capan & Suarez, 32).

To assist librarians and teachers who might use their bibliography as a selection tool, Capan & Suarez identify, annotate, evaluate and code eight picture books on overall literary and aesthetic quality. These titles are *Starting School* by Janet & Allen Ahlberg, *Under Sammy's Bed* by Odette Elliott, *How My Parents Learned to Eat* by Ina Friedman, *Somewhere in Africa* by Ingrid Mennen and Niki Daly, *I Visit My Tutu and*

*Grandma* by Nancy Mower, *Living in Two Worlds* by Maxine Rosenberg, *Winter Wood* by David Spohn, and *"More More More," Said the Baby: Three Love Stories* by Vera B. Williams. They include *Somewhere in Africa* due to a review that mentions biracialism, but "there is nothing in the text or illustrations to verify this" (Capan, 34).

Young children need to see images like themselves and their families because identity development is a critical component of overall early childhood development (Wardle, 55). This sense of identity particularly affects the later development of self-esteem (Kenney, 3). Whereas Caucasian children in America never consider, let alone doubt, that the characters on television and in books will look like them, non-Caucasian families have always had fewer choices to offer their children. If public schools are supposed to serve and encourage the development of the children of their communities, then the books in their schools' media centers should portray the home lives of all types of children.

While representation of racially mixed characters and families in books for children has recently crept closer toward mainstream, this gain is still indistinguishable compared to the masses of children's materials currently published. Approximately 8,272 juvenile books were published in 2001 (Bowker, 548), and yet barely a handful that include racially mixed characters or families can be located.

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. What children's picture books exist that feature racially mixed characters and/or racially mixed families?
2. Are these books collected by elementary school media centers in the Wake County Public School System?
3. If so, are certain books in this category more likely to be collected than others?
4. If so, why? What do the highly collected books have in common?
5. Are these books specifically requested in elementary school media centers?
6. Which racial pairings are most frequently portrayed in such children's picture books?

## METHODOLOGY

To create the survey instrument, I first set out to compile a current list of all the children's picture books that include a racially mixed child or family. What was intended to be a "first step" soon became a time-consuming fixation. As I gathered more and more titles, three categories emerged. First, many picture books with Caucasian families adopting children of different racial backgrounds exist. Because these characters and families are not biologically multiracial, titles in this subcategory were not included on the final survey instrument. Two other subcategories emerged: picture books that directly addressed the racially mixed issue, and picture books that featured mixed-race characters yet had a completely independent storyline. All the titles from both of these subcategories are present on the actual survey instrument.

### ***Locating Mixed Race Materials:***

For such a specific topic, it can be incredibly challenging to find picture books with racially mixed characters and families. Even harder to unearth are relevant journal

articles or research. While a limited amount of pertinent information is available, finding it can be a frustrating experience due to the plethora of subject headings and keywords used to catalog this material. Unfortunately, few picture book selection guides even include the terms "racially mixed" or "biracial" in their indexes, and the couple that did referred the reader to "see multiracial". While multiracial is a better word than biracial to describe mixed-race families and children,<sup>1</sup> it is most commonly used in the United States to mean "non-white". The corresponding "multiracial" index listing would then have perhaps two titles with racially mixed characters amongst a long list of non-Caucasian character books.

Since this is a relatively newly recognized topic, print and electronic sources have been using various terms to catalog their mixed race materials. This means that to conduct a truly comprehensive investigation, the information seeker must perform multiple searches in each database, employing the overabundance of possible keywords.

The following is my personal compilation of potential keywords and search terms. Terms found in the *Library of Congress Subject Headings* are denoted by the \*, while terms provided in the *Sears List of Subject Headings* are followed by the ^.

- Biracial
  - o biracial children
  - o biracial families
  - o biracial people
- Children of
  - o children of interracial marriage\*
  - o children of biracial marriage
  - o children of mixed marriage
- Inter marriage^
- Interracial

---

<sup>1</sup> Very few Americans (at least) are 100% one race. Even most Caucasians have ancestors from different European countries. Therefore, the term "biracial" is technically incorrect since each half of a marriage (or sexual union) already consists of more than one race. A point that came to light during the 2000 Census debate is that the majority of Americans would have to check "biracial" or "multiracial" if the Caucasian choice was divided up more specifically.

- interracial adoption\*
- interracial children
- interracial families
- interracial friendship
- interracial marriage\*^
- interracial people
- interracial romance
- Mixed Marriage^
- Mixed-race
  - mixed-race children
  - mixed-race families
  - mixed-race people
- Multiethnic
  - multiethnic children
  - multiethnic families
  - multiethnic people
- Multiracial
  - multiracial children
  - multiracial families
  - multiracial people
- Racially mixed
  - racially mixed children\*^
  - racially mixed families
  - racially mixed people\*

Armed with these subject headings, multiple searches were conducted in as many places as possible. Face to face inquiries were made at the local public library and at several area bookstores. The public children's librarian could only recommend looking in sources such as *A to Zoo* or *Our Family, Our Friends, Our World*, which contain nothing more specific than the broad topic of "Multicultural". The electronic databases for both the public and university library produced titles for the above subject headings. Electronic databases such as *Library Literature*, *OCLC First Search* and *ERIC* revealed the few pertinent research articles. The Internet search engine, Google, provided links to websites dealing with racially mixed people and families, and to chat groups such as MSN's "Biracial Mommies" group. Several of these websites and chat groups had posted their own grass roots bibliographies for racially mixed children and young adults. Online bookstores such as Barnes and Nobles.com and Amazon.com were used for searches as well as to flesh out titles found in the electronic version of *Infotrac's Books*

*In Print* and sometimes also led the way to new titles through the feature "Other people who bought \_\_\_\_\_ also purchased..."

***Instrument:***

The survey used in this study lists 35 titles of picture books that include non-adopted racially mixed characters and/or families. One title on the survey, W. Nikola-Lisa's *Bein' With You This Way*, was eliminated after further examination showed children of different shades interacting and celebrating being different and still the same, but did not include a definite racially mixed character or family. Elementary school media specialists checked whether each title was included in their school's collection, and were asked to add any possible unlisted titles appropriate to this category. A copy of the survey instrument is located in Appendix A.

***Procedure:***

In September 2002, the survey was sent via in-system courier to all 79 public elementary school media centers in Wake County. Approximately two weeks later, a reminder was posted to the Wake County Media Services listserv. Respondents returned 52 completed survey instruments for a return rate of 66 percent.

## **FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

***Existing Racially Mixed Picture Books:***

Thirty-four children's picture books that include non-adopted racially mixed children or families were identified. Some directly address the racially mixed issue, while others feature mixed-race characters yet have a completely independent storyline. (See Appendix A for titles and authors on the survey, Appendix C for an annotated bibliography.) All 34 books are present in the Wake County Public School System, which allows for interlibrary loan via their in-house courier system.

TABLE 1

**Identified Picture Books with Racially Mixed Characters or Families**

| <b>Author</b>       | <b>Title</b>                                                         |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Arnold Adoff        | <i>All the Colors of the Race</i>                                    |
| Arnold Adoff        | <i>Black is Brown is Tan</i>                                         |
| Arnold Adoff        | <i>Hard to Be Six</i>                                                |
| Andrea Cheng        | <i>Grandfather Counts</i>                                            |
| Nina Crews          | <i>Snowball</i>                                                      |
| Marguerite W. Davol | <i>Black, White, Just Right!</i>                                     |
| Ina R. Friedman     | <i>How My Parents Learned to Eat</i>                                 |
| Sarah Garland       | <i>Billy and Belle</i>                                               |
| Roz Grace           | <i>Anthony's Surprise</i>                                            |
| Sheila Hamanaka     | <i>All the Colors of the Earth</i>                                   |
| Amy Heath           | <i>Sofie's Role</i>                                                  |
| Toyomi Igus         | <i>Two Mrs. Gibsons</i>                                              |
| Angela Johnson      | <i>The Aunt in Our House</i>                                         |
| Emma Kallok         | <i>Gem</i>                                                           |
| Bethany Kandel      | <i>Growing Up Biracial: Trevor's Story</i>                           |
| Karen Katz          | <i>The Colors of Us</i>                                              |
| Katie Kissinger     | <i>All the Colors We Are: the Story of How We Get Our Skin Color</i> |
| Pili Mandelbaum     | <i>You Be Me, I'll Be You</i>                                        |
| Alice McGill        | <i>Molly Bannaky</i>                                                 |
| Lawrence McKay Jr.  | <i>Journey Home</i>                                                  |
| Isabell Monk        | <i>Hope</i>                                                          |
| Isabell Monk        | <i>Family</i>                                                        |
| Robert Munsch       | <i>Something Good</i>                                                |
| Mimi Otey Little    | <i>Yoshiko and the Foreigner</i>                                     |
| Jama Kim Rattigan   | <i>Dumpling Soup</i>                                                 |
| Faith Ringgold      | <i>Bonjour, Lonnie</i>                                               |
| Ellen Senisi        | <i>For My Family, Love, Allie</i>                                    |
| Angela Seward       | <i>Goodnight, Daddy</i>                                              |
| Susan Straight      | <i>Bear E. Bear</i>                                                  |
| Leyla Torres        | <i>Liliana's Grandmothers</i>                                        |
| John Updike         | <i>A Child's Calendar</i>                                            |
| Garth Williams      | <i>The Rabbits' Wedding</i>                                          |
| Vera B. Williams    | <i>"More More More," Said the Baby: Three Love Stories</i>           |
| Natasha Wing        | <i>Jalapeno Bagels</i>                                               |

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**Amounts Collected in the Wake County Public School System & Commonalities of**

**Highly Collected Books:**

**TABLE 2**

**Highly Collected Titles**

**Highly Collected (in 24 - 45 Collections)**

| <b>Title</b>                                                   | <b>Owned by this #<br/>of schools</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>How My Parents Learned to Eat</i>                           | 45                                    |
| <i>"More More More," Said the Baby:<br/>Three Love Stories</i> | 42                                    |
| <i>A Child's Calendar</i>                                      | 38                                    |
| <i>All the Colors of the Earth</i>                             | 36                                    |
| <i>All the Colors of the Race</i>                              | 34                                    |
| <i>Black is Brown is Tan</i>                                   | 32                                    |
| <i>Dumpling Soup</i>                                           | 32                                    |
| <i>Sofie's Role</i>                                            | 27                                    |
| <i>Molly Bannaky</i>                                           | 24                                    |

Nine titles are highly collected; meaning at least 46% of the 52 elementary school media centers own a copy. The most often collected book is Ina Friedman's *How My Parents Learned to Eat*, with 87% of the school media centers owning a copy. In this well reviewed, Christopher Award-winning, ALA Notable book, a biracial daughter tells the story of how her Japanese mother and Caucasian-American father fell in love. *How My Parents Learned to Eat* appears on a *Reading Rainbow* episode, which may partially account for why it is so widely collected. Five of the nine highly collected titles have won prestigious awards, with the second and third most collected titles (Vera B. Williams' *"More More More," Said the Baby: Three Love Stories* and John Updike's *A Child's Calendar*, respectively) both being Caldecott Honor Award books. The well-known author, Arnold Adoff, created two of the non-award winners in this category. Adoff's *Black is Brown is Tan*, based on the Caucasian author's marriage to African American children's author Virginia Hamilton, was the first picture book published to feature an interracial family. The awards, the publicity (being on *Reading Rainbow*, being the first

children's book published with a mixed race family) and the popularity of an author may have all contributed to the repeated purchasing of these most highly collected books.

TABLE 3

*Mid Collected Titles***Mid Collected (in 16 - 6 Collections)**

| <b>Title</b>                     | <b>Owned by this #<br/>of schools</b> |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>The Colors of Us</i>          | 16                                    |
| <i>Hard to Be Six</i>            | 14                                    |
| <i>Jalapeno Bagels</i>           | 13                                    |
| <i>Something Good</i>            | 13                                    |
| <i>Two Mrs. Gibsons</i>          | 12                                    |
| <i>Grandfather Counts</i>        | 10                                    |
| <i>Journey Home</i>              | 9                                     |
| <i>Snowball</i>                  | 9                                     |
| <i>Yoshiko and the Foreigner</i> | 8                                     |
| <i>Hope</i>                      | 7                                     |
| <i>Liliana's Grandmothers</i>    | 6                                     |

TABLE 4

*Rarely Collected Titles***Rarely Collected (in 5 - 1 Collections)**

| <b>Title</b>                                                             | <b>Owned by this #<br/>of schools</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| <i>Black, White, Just Right!</i>                                         | 5                                     |
| <i>Bonjour, Lonnie</i>                                                   | 5                                     |
| <i>For My Family, Love, Allie</i>                                        | 5                                     |
| <i>You Be Me, I'll Be You</i>                                            | 5                                     |
| <i>The Rabbits' Wedding</i>                                              | 4                                     |
| <i>Family</i>                                                            | 3                                     |
| <i>Growing Up Biracial: Trevor's Story</i>                               | 3                                     |
| <i>All the Colors We Are: the Story of<br/>How We Get Our Skin Color</i> | 2                                     |
| <i>The Aunt in Our House</i>                                             | 2                                     |
| <i>Bear E. Bear</i>                                                      | 2                                     |
| <i>Billy and Belle</i>                                                   | 2                                     |
| <i>Anthony's Surprise</i>                                                | 2                                     |
| <i>Gem</i>                                                               | 1                                     |
| <i>Goodnight, Daddy</i>                                                  | 1                                     |

Eleven books from the survey are mid-collected with between 12 to 31% of the 52 media centers owning a copy. Fourteen titles are rarely collected, meaning less than 1% of the 52 media centers own a copy. Two of these books are by well-known and therefore well-collected children's authors, so it was surprising to see that only five media centers own Faith Ringgold's *Bonjour Lonnie*, and only two media centers own Angela Johnson's *The Aunt in Our House*. None of the books in these two divisions have won any awards. (see Appendix B)

TABLE 5

**Total Racially Mixed Picture Book Collection per Media Center****Total Racially Mixed Collection  
per Media Center**

| Media Center<br>Collection # | Total # of Picture Books<br>with Racially Mixed<br>Characters Owned |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1                            | 10                                                                  |
| 2                            | 7                                                                   |
| 3                            | 8                                                                   |
| 4                            | 4                                                                   |
| 5                            | 5                                                                   |
| 6                            | 2                                                                   |
| 7                            | 7                                                                   |
| 8                            | 7                                                                   |
| 9                            | 7                                                                   |
| 10                           | 11                                                                  |
| 11                           | 9                                                                   |
| 12                           | 11                                                                  |
| 13                           | 12                                                                  |
| 14                           | 11                                                                  |
| 15                           | 14                                                                  |
| 16                           | 6                                                                   |
| 17                           | 15                                                                  |
| 18                           | 7                                                                   |
| 19                           | 6                                                                   |
| 20                           | 9                                                                   |
| 21                           | 6                                                                   |
| 22                           | 12                                                                  |
| 23                           | 13                                                                  |
| 24                           | 6                                                                   |
| 25                           | 1                                                                   |

|    |    |
|----|----|
| 26 | 17 |
| 27 | 10 |
| 28 | 8  |
| 29 | 19 |
| 30 | 8  |
| 31 | 14 |
| 32 | 12 |
| 33 | 12 |
| 34 | 11 |
| 35 | 12 |
| 36 | 10 |
| 37 | 11 |
| 38 | 7  |
| 39 | 6  |
| 40 | 16 |
| 41 | 10 |
| 42 | 11 |
| 43 | 13 |
| 44 | 5  |
| 45 | 9  |
| 46 | 9  |
| 47 | 16 |
| 48 | 4  |
| 49 | 12 |
| 50 | 5  |
| 51 | 11 |
| 52 | 9  |

**Total****493****Mean = 9.48****Range = 1 to 19****Median = 9.5****Mode = 11**

The average media center in the Wake County Public School System owns approximately 9.5 of the 34 identified books with racially mixed characters or families. The media center with the largest collection of these 34 titles owns just 19, which equals owning 56% of this identified collection. Sadly, another media center's collection includes only a copy of Robert Munsch's *Something Good*.

TABLE 6

*Titles Suggested by Surveyed Media Specialists***Titles Suggested by Surveyed Media Specialists**

| <b>Media Center #</b> | <b>Suggested Titles</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b>Comments Made</b>                                                                                            |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2                     | <i>The Other Side</i><br><i>Under the Night Quilt</i><br><i>The Blues Singers</i><br><i>Uncle Jed's Barbershop</i><br><i>A Chair for My Mother</i>                                                                                                      | "There are <u>many</u> picture book!" (sic)                                                                     |
| 4                     | <i>Mrs. Katz and Tush</i> , P. Polacco<br><i>Chicken Sunday</i> , P. Polacco<br><i>Little Bill</i> books (series)*                                                                                                                                      | "Reflected in the illustrations [ex: <i>The Meanest Thing to Say</i> ]"                                         |
| 7                     | <i>Like Jake and Me</i> , M. Jukes                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | "Actually it isn't biracial, but I had a complaint about a character's nakedness, so I thought I'd mention it!" |
| 8                     | <i>Dancing with Indians</i> , A. Medearis<br><i>Family Pictures</i> , C. Lomas Garza<br><i>In My Family</i> , Lomas Garza<br><i>My Very Own Room</i> , A. Perez<br><i>Uncle Chente's Picnic</i> , D. Bertrand<br><i>The Christmas Gift</i> , F. Jimenez | "On second thought, these seem more like bilingual than multicultural."                                         |
| 18                    | <i>A Mother for Choco</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | "This story is about a bird who becomes part of a family of different animals."                                 |
| 19                    | <i>Jin Woo</i> , E. Bunting                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |
| 33                    | <i>Jin Woo</i> , E. Bunting<br><i>A Mother for Choco</i> , K. Kasza                                                                                                                                                                                     | "Adoption from Korea; Bear adopts a bird (not sure about criteria)"                                             |
| 34                    | <i>Yo! Yes?</i><br><i>Chicken Sunday</i><br><i>The Other Side</i><br><i>Pink and Say</i>                                                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                 |
| 36                    | <i>A Day's Work</i> , E. Bunting                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | "Oops - sorry - it only shows good interactions between races."                                                 |

Of the 52 schools that returned the survey, nine media specialists offered additional titles of books with multiracial characters or families. Only three of these nine actually listed books that involved *racially mixed* characters instead of characters that are not white, or those that interact with characters of different races. Part of this confusion may have resulted from the terminology used on the survey. While the

opening paragraph describes the search for "racially mixed characters", the term "bi/multiracial" was used twice in other parts of the survey. This combined with the usual low level of attention paid to these children and families possibly led to the six inappropriate responses. Some of these six media specialists recognized that their recommendations did not meet the criteria, and wrote little notes such as, "Oops – sorry – it only shows good interaction between races" about Eve Bunting's *A Day's Work* and, "On second thought, these seem more like bilingual than multicultural". Of the three media specialists who recommended appropriate books, two offered Eve Bunting's story of a Caucasian family adopting a baby from Korea, *Jin Woo*. Two also suggested Keiko Kasza's *A Mother for Choco*, where a bear family adopts a bird. As this study did not include stories with racially mixed families through adoption, no new titles were added to my bibliography.

Possible wording questions aside, this survey reveals the need to educate media specialists about this topic, and to raise their awareness of this underrepresented population in the public schools' media collections. Understanding the concept of biracialism and knowing the need for these books must precede their acquisition. This lack of support, information, and representation for multiracial children and their families has serious implications, both for the multiracial kids, who may feel alienated and ignored, as well as for society as a whole.

#### ***Requests For Racially Mixed Materials:***

Forty-nine of the 52 surveys included an answer to the question, "Has anyone ever *specifically* requested materials for or about multiracial kids or families?" Forty-three media specialists, or 88%, responded that they had never been asked to find such materials. This number should probably be higher as two of the six media specialists who responded that they had been requested to look for such materials were from the group of media specialists who suggested inappropriate titles to the question seeking

additional books for this topic. It is very likely that they maintained the same train of thought and answered this question as if it had read, "Has anyone ever specifically requested materials for or about *non-white* kids or families?"

**Most Frequently Portrayed Racial Pairings:**

**TABLE 7**

**Racial Pairings per Title**

| Racial Pairings per Title           |                                        |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| Title                               | Ethnicities of Character/ Family       |
| "More More More," Said the Baby:    |                                        |
| Three Love Stories                  | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| A Child's Calendar                  | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| All the Colors of the Race          | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Black is Brown is Tan               | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Sofie's Role                        | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Molly Bannaky                       | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Hard to Be Six                      | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Something Good                      | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Snowball                            | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Hope                                | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Black, White, Just Right!           | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Bonjour, Lonnie                     | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| For My Family, Love, Allie          | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| You Be Me, I'll Be You              | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| The Rabbits' Wedding                | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Family                              | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Growing Up Biracial: Trevor's Story | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| The Aunt in Our House               | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Bear E. Bear                        | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Billy and Belle                     | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Anthony's Surprise                  | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Gem                                 | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| Goodnight, Daddy                    | African-American/ Caucasian            |
| How My Parents Learned to Eat       | Japanese/Caucasian                     |
| Yoshiko and the Foreigner           | Japanese/ Caucasian                    |
| Grandfather Counts                  | Chinese/ Caucasian                     |
| Journey Home                        | Vietnamese/ Caucasian                  |
| Dumpling Soup                       | Korean-Chinese-Japanese-Hawaiian-Anglo |
| Jalapeno Bagels                     | Hispanic/ Jewish Caucasian             |
| Liliana's Grandmothers              | Hispanic/ Caucasian                    |
| Two Mrs. Gibsons                    | African-American/ Asian                |

Of the 31 stories that clearly identify two different races, 23 present African-American/Caucasian mixed families. Asian/Caucasian mixed characters exist in five picture books and there are two instances of Hispanic/Caucasian families. Only one of the picture books examined, Toyomi Igus' *Two Mrs. Gibsons*, presents a racially mixed character who isn't half Caucasian. This African-American/Asian mix is also seen in the author's family photo at the end of Mimi Otey Little's *Yoshiko and the Foreigner*, but oddly, the illustrations for this story present an Asian/Caucasian family. With 74% of the racial pairings depicting African-American/Caucasian pairs, children from other mixed backgrounds have even less of a chance of seeing themselves in today's picture book. If a racially mixed child isn't half Caucasian, there is one book that may model their family, and that is only if they are African-American and Asian. What about students who are half Hispanic, half Asian? Or half Hispanic, half African-American? With less than 1% of 31 titles representing non-Caucasian racially mixed children, it is easy to see who is "invisible" in this already unseen population.

### CONCLUSIONS

The results of this study suggest that while racially mixed individuals are better recognized in our country, both as celebrities in the media and as ordinary citizens on our national Census, children's picture books have made small strides towards representing this population. Though the twelve picture book titles with non-adopted racially mixed characters available in 1993 have more than doubled in 2002, there are still very few of these books, and even fewer are collected in school media centers. Unfortunately, what Capan & Suarez deduced in their 1993 study still holds true almost 10 years later: "The cultural experiences of children who are the product of a biracial or biethnic marriage have generally been ignored in the school curriculum" (Capan, 32).

Picture books with racially mixed characters seem to be in a certain "beginning phase" that other ethnic literature has gone through. Since there are not many mixed-race picture books in print, perhaps publishers, now cognizant of this need, are printing stories that may normally be rejected. Media specialists might have chosen not to spend their precious budget dollars on racially mixed materials of questionable literary quality; this may explain some of the media centers' lack of collecting. While some wonderful stories with racially mixed characters have been created, the existing pool of such picture books needs to grow not just in quantity, but also in quality. A representation of mixed families without a Caucasian component also needs to be created.

### FUTURE RESEARCH

This investigation into public elementary school collections of racially mixed picture books is just a small piece of the research that needs to be done with this topic. Depth could be added to this study by duplicating the research in other counties in North Carolina, in other states, and across the United States. Data from private schools could be collected and compared to that of public schools, and data from urban districts could be compared to that from rural districts. This would help determine if racially mixed students' lack of representation in their school's picture book collection is as widespread as it appears to be in the Wake County Public Schools media collections.

One question pertaining to the racial identity of picture book characters that begs to be answered is, "Who decides to make the character and family biracial if this is not directly stated in the text?" Meaning, do authors instruct illustrators to create biracial characters? Do editors or publishing houses determine this based on marketability? Can illustrators create biracial characters against the author's will?

While this study examined racially mixed picture books that didn't feature interracial adoption, elementary school media center collections should offer children's

books that do. It would also be interesting to identify and analyze the collection of interracial adoption books, as well as picture books about interracial friendships, like Chris Raschka's Caldecott Honor book, *Yo! Yes?* (Orchard, 1993).

Young Adult literature provides a forum for characters of different races to not only be friends, but to date. Are these books available in our public middle and high school media center collections? This could be a further collection to identify and analyze.

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## APPENDIX A

9/6/02

Dear Fellow Elementary School Media Specialists,

This is my first year as a school media specialist. I am also trying (desperately!) to finish my Library Science degree, and need your help. My master's paper examines children's picture books with racially mixed characters and/or families. It would take you, the media assistant, or a volunteer no more than 20 minutes to complete the following checklist, and I would be forever grateful. All the information you provide will remain anonymous in my paper.

## MULTIRACIAL PICTURE BOOKS CHECKLIST

*a checkmark = one copy owned*

| AUTHOR              | TITLE                                                                | Included in<br>Our School's<br>Collection | Not Included in<br>Our School's<br>Collection |
|---------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Arnold Adoff        | <i>All the Colors of the Race</i>                                    |                                           |                                               |
| Arnold Adoff        | <i>Black is Brown is Tan</i>                                         |                                           |                                               |
| Arnold Adoff        | <i>Hard to Be Six</i>                                                |                                           |                                               |
| Andrea Cheng        | <i>Grandfather Counts</i>                                            |                                           |                                               |
| Nina Crews          | <i>Snowball</i>                                                      |                                           |                                               |
| Marguerite W. Davol | <i>Black, White, Just Right!</i>                                     |                                           |                                               |
| Ina R. Friedman     | <i>How My Parents Learned to Eat</i>                                 |                                           |                                               |
| Sarah Garland       | <i>Billy and Belle</i>                                               |                                           |                                               |
| Roz Grace           | <i>Anthony's Surprise</i>                                            |                                           |                                               |
| Sheila Hamanaka     | <i>All the Colors of the Earth</i>                                   |                                           |                                               |
| Amy Heath           | <i>Sofie's Role</i>                                                  |                                           |                                               |
| Toyomi Igus         | <i>Two Mrs. Gibsons</i>                                              |                                           |                                               |
| Angela Johnson      | <i>The Aunt in Our House</i>                                         |                                           |                                               |
| Emma Kallok         | <i>Gem</i>                                                           |                                           |                                               |
|                     | <i>Growing Up Biracial: Trevor's Story</i>                           |                                           |                                               |
| Bethany Kandel      |                                                                      |                                           |                                               |
| Karen Katz          | <i>The Colors of Us</i>                                              |                                           |                                               |
|                     | <i>All the Colors We Are: the Story of How We Get Our Skin Color</i> |                                           |                                               |
| Katie Kissinger     |                                                                      |                                           |                                               |
| Pili Mandelbaum     | <i>You Be Me, I'll Be You</i>                                        |                                           |                                               |
| Alice McGill        | <i>Molly Bannaky</i>                                                 |                                           |                                               |
| Lawrence McKay Jr.  | <i>Journey Home</i>                                                  |                                           |                                               |
| Isabell Monk        | <i>Hope</i>                                                          |                                           |                                               |
| Isabell Monk        | <i>Family</i>                                                        |                                           |                                               |
| Robert Munsch       | <i>Something Good</i>                                                |                                           |                                               |
| W. Nikola-Lisa      | <i>Bein' With You This Way</i>                                       |                                           |                                               |

|                    |                                                            |  |  |
|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--|--|
| Mimi Otey Little   | <i>Yoshiko and the Foreigner</i>                           |  |  |
| Jama Kim Rattigan  | <i>Dumpling Soup</i>                                       |  |  |
| Faith Ringgold     | <i>Bonjour, Lonnie</i>                                     |  |  |
| Ellen Senisi       | <i>For My Family, Love, Allie</i>                          |  |  |
| Angela Seward      | <i>Goodnight, Daddy</i>                                    |  |  |
| Susan Straight     | <i>Bear E. Bear</i>                                        |  |  |
| Leyla Torres       | <i>Liliana's Grandmothers</i>                              |  |  |
| John Updike        | <i>A Child's Calendar</i>                                  |  |  |
| Garth Williams     | <i>The Rabbits' Wedding</i>                                |  |  |
| Vera B. Williams   | <i>"More More More," Said the Baby: Three Love Stories</i> |  |  |
| Natasha Wing       | <i>Jalapeno Bagels</i>                                     |  |  |
| <b>Total Owned</b> |                                                            |  |  |

Are there any picture books you know of that include a bi/multiracial character or family not listed above? If so, please list those titles and authors, as well as how many copies your media center owns, here.

Has anyone ever *specifically* requested materials for or about multiracial kids or families?

yes                      no

How many volumes are in your picture book collection? \_\_\_\_\_

Your name and school will **not** be identified in this study.

Elementary School Name:

Media Specialist(s):

Please use the provided address sticker to return this by Friday September 20, 2002.  
Thank you so much for your help!

Susan Lovett, Media Specialist

Aversboro Elementary School

662-2332

[slovett@wcpss.net](mailto:slovett@wcpss.net)

**APPENDIX B**  
**Highly Collected (in 24 - 45 collections)**

| Copyright | Title                                                      | # of schools | Ethnicities of Character/<br>Family                                                     | Awards                                                                                                |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1984      | <i>How My Parents Learned to Eat</i>                       | 45           | Japanese/Caucasian                                                                      | Christopher Award, ALA Notable Best Book                                                              |
| 1990      | <i>"More More More," Said the Baby: Three Love Stories</i> | 42           | African-American/ Caucasian                                                             | Caldecott Honor                                                                                       |
| 1999      | <i>A Child's Calendar</i>                                  | 38           | African-American/ Caucasian                                                             | Caldecott Honor, Parents' Choice Award, ALA Notable Best Book                                         |
| 1994      | <i>All the Colors of the Earth</i>                         | 36           | Lots of different children, two racially mixed families shown, both are Brown/Caucasian |                                                                                                       |
| 1987      | <i>All the Colors of the Race</i>                          | 34           | African-American/ Caucasian                                                             |                                                                                                       |
| 1973      | <i>Black is Brown is Tan</i>                               | 32           | African-American/ Caucasian                                                             |                                                                                                       |
| 1993      | <i>Dumpling Soup</i>                                       | 32           | Korean-Chinese-Japanese-Hawaiian-Anglo                                                  | New Voices, New World Multicultural Fiction Winner                                                    |
| 1992      | <i>Sofie's Role</i>                                        | 27           | African-American/ Caucasian                                                             |                                                                                                       |
| 1999      | <i>Molly Bannaky</i>                                       | 24           | African-American/ Caucasian                                                             | 2000 ALA Notable, Jane Adams Honor Picture Book, 2000 Notable Children's Trade Book in Social Studies |

**1990 Average Copyright**

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### Mid-Collected (in 16 - 6 collections)

| Copyright | Title                            | # of schools | Ethnicities of Character/<br>Family | Awards |
|-----------|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------|
| 1999      | <i>The Colors of Us</i>          | 16           | Brown child/ Caucasian mother       |        |
| 1991      | <i>Hard to Be Six</i>            | 14           | African-American/ Caucasian         |        |
| 1996      | <i>Jalapeno Bagels</i>           | 13           | Hispanic/ Jewish                    |        |
| 1990      | <i>Something Good</i>            | 13           | African-American/ Caucasian         |        |
| 1996      | <i>Two Mrs. Gibsons</i>          | 12           | African-American/ Asian             |        |
| 2000      | <i>Grandfather Counts</i>        | 10           | Asian/ Caucasian                    |        |
| 2000      | <i>Journey Home</i>              | 9            | Vietnamese/ Caucasian               |        |
| 1997      | <i>Snowball</i>                  | 9            | African-American/ Caucasian         |        |
| 1996      | <i>Yoshiko and the Foreigner</i> | 8            | Asian/ Caucasian                    |        |
| 1999      | <i>Hope</i>                      | 7            | African-American/ Caucasian         |        |
| 1998      | <i>Liliana's Grandmothers</i>    | 6            | Hispanic/ Caucasian                 |        |

1996 Average Copyright

### Rarely Collected (in 5 - 1 collections)

| Copyright | Title                                                                | # of schools | Ethnicities of Character/<br>Family                       | Awards |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| 1993      | <i>Black, White, Just Right!</i>                                     | 5            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1996      | <i>Bonjour, Lonnie</i>                                               | 5            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1998      | <i>For My Family, Love, Allie</i>                                    | 5            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1990      | <i>You Be Me, I'll Be You</i>                                        | 5            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1958      | <i>The Rabbits' Wedding</i>                                          | 4            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 2001      | <i>Family</i>                                                        | 3            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1997      | <i>Growing Up Biracial: Trevor's Story</i>                           | 3            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1994      | <i>All the Colors We Are: the Story of How We Get Our Skin Color</i> | 2            | non-fiction; shows one African-American/ Caucasian family |        |
| 1996      | <i>The Aunt in Our House</i>                                         | 2            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1995      | <i>Bear E. Bear</i>                                                  | 2            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1992      | <i>Billy and Belle</i>                                               | 2            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 1999      | <i>Anthony's Surprise</i>                                            | 2            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 2001      | <i>Gem</i>                                                           | 1            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |
| 2001      | <i>Goodnight, Daddy</i>                                              | 1            | African-American/ Caucasian                               |        |

1994 Average Copyright

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## APPENDIX C

## Annotated Racially Mixed Picture Books

Adoff, Arnold. All the Colors of the Race. Illustrated by John L. Steptoe. HarperCollins, 1987.

Reviews: *Publishers Weekly*

A biracial child, whose mother is African-American and whose father is Caucasian, shares his point of view through poetry.

Adoff, Arnold. Black is Brown is Tan. Illustrated by Emily Arnold McCully. HarperCollins, 1973.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Library Journal*, *New York Times Book Review*, *School Library Journal*

With poetic verse, an African American-Caucasian family describes who they are. This was the first children's book published that explicitly dealt with being biracial.

Adoff, Arnold. Hard to Be Six. Illustrated by Cheryl Hanna. HarperCollins, 1991.

Reviews: *School Library Journal*

A six year old younger brother in this African American-Caucasian family describes the difficulty of his age, but his grandmother helps him realize that every age faces its own troubles, and that one should slow down to enjoy life.

Ahlberg, Janet & Allen. Starting School. Viking Kestrel, 1988.

Reviews: *School Library Journal*

Eight 1<sup>st</sup> graders are depicted overcoming the normal small challenges of starting school. The illustrations include one young boy and his racially mixed family.

Cheng, Andrea. Grandfather Counts. Illustrated by Ange Zhang. Lee & Low Books, 2000.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *MultiCultural Review*

A Chinese-Caucasian girl must adjust to living with her native, non-English speaking, Chinese grandfather.

Cisneros, Sandra. Hairs/Pelitos. Illustrated by Terry Ybanez. Knopf, 1994.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*

Awards: Parents Magazine Best Book of the Year

Each family member's different hair is discussed. While part of the family's heritage is Hispanic, because the non-traditional illustrations show the kids as blue, green, and yellow, a second racial background can not be definitely identified.

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Crews, Nina. Snowball. Greenwillow Books, 1997.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*

A little girl dreams of snow after hearing the weather report, but then must wait and wait for her dream to come true. The child's biracial background is identifiable only by comparing her appearance to her mother's.

Davol, Marguerite W. Black, White, Just Right! Illustrated by Irene Trivas. Whitman, Albert & Co., 1993.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Publishers Weekly*

The young daughter of an African-American mother and Caucasian father identifies the differences between her parents and how she is the "just right!" mixture of both personalities.

Elliott, Odette. Sammy Goes Flying. Illustrated by Amanda Welch. Andre Deutsch, 1991.

In this sequel to *Under Sammy's Bed*, Sammy uses his imagination to enable him to fly, until his Grandmother provides a better way.

Elliott, Odette. Under Sammy's Bed. Illustrated by Amanda Welch. Andre Deutsch, 1989.

His three older siblings ignore preschooler Sammy until their pet hamster is found under his bed. The African-American mother and Caucasian father are identified only through illustrations.

Friedman, Ina R. How My Parents Learned to Eat. Illustrated by Allen Say. Houghton Mifflin, 1984.

Reviews: *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Fanfare Selection*, *Horn Book*, *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, *New York Times Book Review*, *Reading Rainbow Review Book*, *School Library Journal*

Awards: ALA Notable Book, Christopher Award

A biracial child tells the story of how her Japanese mother and Caucasian-American father fell in love.

Garland, Sarah. Billy and Belle. Viking, 1992.

Reviews: *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*

Since the new baby is coming, Belle gets to spend the day at school with her older brother and wreaks havoc in the classroom. Belle's Caucasian mother and African-American father are identified solely through illustrations.

Grace, Roz. Anthony's Surprise. Illustrated by James Melvin. BMF Press, 1999.

Reviews: *School Library Journal*

Anthony's parents "dread" the day they have to explain to their adopted son why his skin is darker than theirs. Not recommended.

Hamanaka, Sheila. All the Colors of the Earth. Morrow, 1994.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Notes From the Windowsill*, *School Library Journal*

This poetic narrative shows that "children come in all the colors of the earth and sky and sea." Two biracial families are visible in the illustrations, but all races of children are shown interacting with each other.

Heath, Amy. Sofie's Role. Illustrated by Sheila Hamanaka. Four Winds Press, 1992.

Reviews: *Horn Book*, *Ingram*, *Kirkus Reviews*

Sofie is so excited to help in her family's pastry shop during the Christmas holidays. Her African-American mother and Caucasian father are identifiable only through illustrations.

Igus, Toyomi. Two Mrs. Gibsons. Illustrated by Daryl Wells. Children's Book Press, 1996.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *MultiCultural Review*, *School Library Journal*

The African-American Mrs. Gibson and the Japanese Mrs. Gibson do things in different ways, but they both love the protagonist and her father.

Johnson, Angela. The Aunt in Our House. Illustrated by David Soman. Orchard, 1996.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *Ingram*, *Kirkus Reviews*

An aunt who seems sad moves into this family's house. The mother is African-American, and the father and his sister, the aunt, are Caucasian.

Kallok, Emma. Gem. Illustrated by Joel Bower. Tricycle Press, 2001.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*

A family friend's saxophone song, titled Gem, is the inspiration for the new baby's name. The father's African-American heritage and mother's Caucasian background are never mentioned in the text by 13 year-old Kallok.

Kandel, Bethany. Growing Up Biracial: Trevor's Story. Photographs by Carol Halebian. Lerner, 1997.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book Guide*

Fifth-grader Trevor introduces the reader to life with his African-American father, Caucasian mother, and two biracial sisters through photos and text.

Katz, Karen. The Colors of Us. Holt, 1999.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Center for Children's Books Bulletin*, *Horn Book*, *Hungry Mind Review*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*

After taking a walk with her Caucasian mother, "brown" Lena realizes that there are many different shades of brown and that all of them are beautiful.

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Kissinger, Katie. All the Colors We Are: The Story of How We Get Our Skin Color.

Photographs by Wernher Krutein. Redleaf Press, 1994.

This nonfiction book explains the science behind skin color as well as the importance of how children learn about skin color through text and photos.

Little, Mimi Otey. Yoshiko and the Foreigner. Frances Foster, 1996.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *School Library Journal*

Even though she is warned to stay away from the American soldiers, Yoshiko cannot help falling in love with this intelligent, kind, and respectful officer.

Mandelbaum, Pili. You Be Me, I'll Be You. Kane-Miller, 1990.

Reviews: *Horn Book*, *Midwest Book Review*

This book walks a fine line between showing a father's love and being offensive. When the biracial daughter of a white father says she wants to look like him, he rubs coffee grounds into his face and pats flour on hers. The father does show Anna beauty parlors where women are getting curls put into their straight hair, and tanning salons for people to have darker skin.

McGill, Alice. Molly Bannaky. Illustrated by Chris Soentpiet. Houghton Mifflin, 1999.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*

Awards: 2000 ALA Notable, Jane Adams Honor Picture Book

This biography tells the story of how Benjamin Banneker's grandparents met. Molly, a former white indentured servant from England, frees her only slave, and they fall in love and marry.

McKay, Lawrence Jr. Journey Home. Illustrated by Dom and Keunhee Lee. Lee & Low, 1998.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Hungry Mind Review*, *Kirkus Review*, *MultiCultural Review*, *Parent's Choice*, *School Library Journal*

The story focuses on a mother's trip back to Vietnam to find out her family history. The story is told from the Vietnamese-Caucasian daughter's point of view.

Mennen, Ingrid and Niki Daly. Somewhere in Africa. Illustrated by Nicolaas Maritz. Dutton, 1992.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*

A boy who lives in an African city reads about the lions, crocodiles, and giraffes of Africa in his library book. While the *School Library Journal* review identifies Ashraf as a child of mixed race, Capan & Suarez's study claims there is nothing in the text or illustrations to prove this.

Monk, Isabell. Family. Illustrated by Janice Lee Porter. Carolrhoda Books, 2001.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Children's Literature*, *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*

In this sequel to *Hope*, a family reunion on the African-American mother's side includes Hope's Caucasian father, and allows Hope to present a recipe as unique as she is.

- Monk, Isabell. Hope. Illustrated by Janice Lee Porter. Carolrhoda Books, 1999.  
Reviews: *Black Issues*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *School Library Journal*  
Hope's African-American grandmother explains what it means to be "mixed" and the symbolism behind her name.
- Mower, Nancy Alpert. I Visit My Tutu and Grandma. Illustrated by Patricia A. Wozniak. Press Pacifica, 1984.  
A Hawaiian-Caucasian child does the same activities with both her Hawaiian and her Caucasian grandmother.
- Munsch, Robert. Something Good. Illustrated by Michael Martchenko. Annick Press, 1990.  
Reviews: *Quill & Quire*  
Young Tyra begs her father to buy "something good" at the grocery store. While race is never discussed, perhaps the Caucasian parents have adopted their brown-skinned children.
- Raschka, Chris. Yo! Yes?. Orchard Books, 1993.  
Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Publisher's Weekly* (starred review), *School Library Journal*  
Awards: ALA Notable, Caldecott Honor  
A lonely African-American boy strikes up a conversation with a lonely Caucasian boy, and a friendship begins.
- Rattigan, Jama Kim. Dumpling Soup. Illustrated by Lillian Hsu-Flanders. Little, Brown & Co., 1993.  
Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Quill & Quire*, *School Library Journal*  
Awards: New Voices, New World MultiCultural Fiction Winner  
Marisa is excited to be included in the traditional dumpling making process for the big family New Year's celebration, but she worries that no one will like her oddly shaped mandoo. Her extended family members are Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Hawaiian, and Caucasian.
- Ringgold, Faith. Bonjour, Lonnie. Hyperion, 1996.  
Reviews: *Booklist*, *MultiCultural Review*, *School Library Journal*  
In this brightly illustrated yet text heavy story, Lonnie travels back in time to meet the parents he never knew. His French mother fell in love with his African-American father who was a soldier in France during the World War II. A rather confusing story that received positive reviews.
- Rosenberg, Maxine. Living in Two Worlds. Photographed by George Ancona. Afterword by Dr. Philip Spivey. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1986.  
Reviews: *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Interracial Books for Children Bulletin*, *School Library Journal*  
This photo essay details the advantages and disadvantages of being biracial.

Senisi, Ellen. For My Family, Love, Allie. Albert Whitman, 1998.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *School Library Journal*

The daughter of an African-American father and a Caucasian mother wants to make a dish to share at the family picnic. Race is never discussed, but the photographs illustrate the life of a real family.

Seward, Angela. Goodnight, Daddy. Illustrated by Donna Ferreiro. Morning Glory Press, 2001.

Reviews: *School Library Journal*

Phoebe is terribly disappointed when her absent father promises to visit and then doesn't show up. Phoebe's mother is visibly Caucasian, and while her father is never shown, Phoebe is most likely half African-American.

Spohn, David. Winter Wood. Lothrop, Lee & Shepard Books, 1991.

Reviews: *School Library Journal*

A young brown skinned boy and his Caucasian father go out into the winter woods to chop firewood, enjoying the work and the natural world around them. It is unclear whether the child is biological or adopted.

Straight, Susan. Bear E. Bear. Illustrated by Marisabina Russo. Hyperion, 1995.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*

When a little sister drops a beloved teddy bear in the mud, waiting for the washing machine cycle to end can last forever. The biracial family is only identified through illustrations.

Torres, Leyla. Liliana's Grandmothers. Farrar Straus & Giroux, 1998.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*

Liliana compares and contrasts the lifestyles of her Caucasian grandmother who lives down the street to her Hispanic grandmother who lives in another country.

Welber, Robert. The Train. Illustrated by Deborah Kogan Ray. Knopf, 1972.

A little girl tries to conquer her fear of the grassy meadow between the house and the train tracks. Her African-American/Asian family is identifiable only through illustrations.

Udike, John. A Child's Calendar. Illustrated by Trina Scharf Hyman. Holiday House, 1999.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Kirkus Reviews*, *Library Journal*, *Mailbox Bookbag*, *Parent's Choice*, *Publishers Weekly*, *School Library Journal*, *Sesame Street Parents*

Awards: 2000 Caldecott Honor, 1999 Parents' Choice Award

Illustrations that show a family enjoying the changing seasons accompany a poem for each month of the year. The Caucasian mother and African-American father have three engaging children.

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Williams, Garth. The Rabbits' Wedding. Harper & Row, 1958.

This simple story of two rabbits enjoying each other's company and getting married so they never had to be apart caused an uproar. Why? One's fur was white, the other's fur was black.

Williams, Vera B. "More More More," Said the Baby: Three Love Stories. Greenwillow Books, 1990.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books*, *Horn Book*, *Quill & Quire*, *School Library Journal* (1990 Best Books)

Awards: Caldecott Honor

Three different families express love for their children. One vignette features a Caucasian grandmother loving on her brown-skinned grandchild.

Wing, Natasha. Jalapeno Bagels. Illustrated by Robert Casilla. Atheneum, 1996.

Reviews: *Booklist*, *Horn Book*, *MultiCultural Review*, *School Library Journal*  
Pablo, whose Mexican mother and Jewish father own a bakery, wants to take a food for International Day that reflects both of his heritages.



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